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VIII. *Account of the Bromus triflorus of Linnæus, in a Letter to Alexander M<sup>r</sup> Leay, Esq. Sec. L. S. By James Edward Smith, M.D. F.R.S. P.L.S.*

Read December 4, 1804.

Norwich, Dec. 1, 1804.

DEAR SIR,

MR. Crowe has this autumn discovered a grass on his estate at Saham, Norfolk, about twenty-six miles from Norwich, which is new to our British Flora, and indeed very little known to botanists in general, the *Bromus triflorus* of Linnæus, first mentioned by him in the 2d edition of *Species Plantarum*, 115.

No specimen of this grass is to be found in the Linnæan herbarium. It appears to have been described on the authority of Forskähl, as being found in Denmark. The only synonym is that of Scheuchzer, *p. 511. t. 5. f. 19*, from which authority it should seem to have been that Germany was also mentioned as its place of growth. Linnæus in his manuscript has added a quotation of *Fl. Danica, t. 440*.

I have Danish specimens, collected by my late friend Mr. Stephen Delessert, jun., which exactly accord with the above-mentioned figures and descriptions, and which are doubtless the *B. triflorus*. Mr. Crowe's specimen no less exactly agrees with mine. I hope to be able another season to obtain a supply for the collection of the Linnean Society and my friends.

Some later synonyms of the grass in question are involved in obscurity. Pollich and Haller are quoted in Reichard's *Systema Plantarum*,

*Plantarum*, as well as Reyger and Moench. The two latter I have not consulted. Pollich's synonym is doubtful, because he describes the awn of the lowermost floret as springing from the top of the glume, that of the next from the back, and those of the third and fourth florets, if there be more than three, which often happens, from the base. I find them all nearly terminal. This author, though an accurate observer, affords a lamentable example of want of botanical philosophy, as well as neglect of the Linnæan rule, respecting natural genera, which I have often had occasion of late to mention, in saying that the above differences in the insertion of the awns might perhaps serve to mark this grass as a new genus. This circumstance ought rather to have taught him, that the insertion of the awn is not infallible as marking a genus at all; on which subject I have already, in the 4th volume of our Transactions, ventured to offer some hints, proposing the strongly fringed or pectinated inner glume as a much better generic mark of *Bromus*. For this reason I cannot but consider the plant now before us as a *Festuca*, its inner glumes being finely downy at the edge, as in that genus, not fringed, nor are the awns always inserted below the top. Sometimes they are as perfectly terminal as in any *Festuca*.

The synonym of Haller, "*Bromus paniculâ laxâ, locustis quadrifloris, brevissimè aristatis, Hall. Helv. No. 1511,*" is adopted by Reichard, on the authority of Moench, but it is pointed out by the suggestion of Haller himself. His description, however, particularly the short awns, and his quotation of Scheuchzer, *t. 5. f. 18*, as well as of Ray, evidently belong rather to *Festuca elatior*. I should without scruple have rejected Haller's synonym, but for a specimen in Mr. Davall's herbarium, gathered by his friend Mr. Du Cros, and marked "*Bromus, H. 1511, var. minor, longiùs aristata.*" This specimen is *Bromus triflorus*. Probably therefore

therefore the Swiss botanists may have confounded them, though the two plants seen together are extremely unlike each other. I have, in the collection of Mr. Davall, a regular series of Haller's grasses by themselves, all numbered, by what authority I know not, in which No. 1511. is *Festuca elatior*, and No. 1510. *Bromus triflorus*; but the description and synonyms of Haller certainly belong to *B. giganteus* of Linnæus, my *Festuca gigantea*, a plant nearly allied indeed to that of which I have been treating, both in generic and specific characters, but, I think, distinct.

I shall conclude by remarking that the rich and interesting Flora of Switzerland, though admirably illustrated by Haller, as far as his own observation went, requires great corrections with regard to synonyms. To this subject my lamented friend, to whose herbarium I have referred above, had given great attention, but he left it incomplete. When I have made good some prior engagements, I hope to communicate the fruit of Mr. Davall's labours and my own, in some shape or other, to the world.

I remain, dear sir, faithfully yours,

J. E. SMITH.

IX. Description